

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-08 HEW-04 MED-02 IO-13
OES-07 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 DHA-05 AID-05 TRSE-00
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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD ECEM EEWT CU
SUBJ: CUBAN MEDICINE IMPORTS

1. USINT OFFICER (GLASSMAN) CALLED, OCTOBER 24, ON
J. RANULFO DUARTE, VICE-DIRECTOR GENERAL OF MEDICUBA,
EXCLUSIVE CUBAN EXPORTER-IMPORTER AND DOMESTIC DISTRIBUTOR
OF PHARMACEUTICALS (INCLUDING TO ARMED FORCES) AND GLASS
AND RUBBER CONTAINERS FOR ENTIRE ECONOMY. (MEDICUBA IS
SUBORDINATED TO MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH). DURATE WAS
ACCOMPANIED BY GEORGINA ALFALLA OF MINCEX.

2. DUARTE SAID THAT ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF CUBAN PHARMACEUTICAL
IMPORTS COME FROM CAPITALIST COUNTRIES. ALL PURCHASES ARE MADE
FOR CASH (I.E., NO CREDIT OR EXTENDED PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS ARE
MADE.) (COMMENT: THUS FIDEL CASTRO'S STATEMENT TO BARBARA WALTERS
TO EFFECT THAT CUBA WOULD NOT BUY EVEN ONE ASPIRIN IF US
EMBARGO WAS LIFTED FOR ONE-WAY MEDICINE SALES DOES NOT REFLECT
CUBAN ECONOMIC POSSIBILITIES. CUBANS CLEARLY COULD SHIFT CASH
PURCHASES FROM OTHER CAPITALIST COUNTRIES TO US). DURANTE
ADDED THAT MEDICUBA HAS NEVER HAD TO DEFER NEEDED PURCHASES
FROM CAPITALIST WORLD BECAUSE OF LACK OF FUNDS.

3. DURATE SAID MORE THAN NINETY PERCENT OF CUBAN PHARMA-
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ECUTICAL IMPORTS ARE PRIMARY MATERIALS FOR MANUFACTURE
OF DRUGS IN SOME 19 LABORATORIES OPERATING IN CUBA. ONLY
MORE TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT DRUGS (SUCH AS INSULIN) ARE IMPORTED
IN FINAL PROCESSED FORM.

4. DURATE DECLINED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON VOLUME OF
CUBAN PHARMACEUTICAL IMPORTATION, BUT SAID THAT DOMESTIC

RETAIL PRICE OF ALL PHARMACEUTICALS SOLD IS 300 MILLION DOLLARS.
(FYI CUBAN PHARMACEUTICAL PURCHASES FROM US
BEFORE 1959 AMOUNTED TO 39 MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY.)

5. MEDICUBA ALSO HAS STRONG INTEREST, DURATE SAID, IN
EXPORTATION. FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE CURRENTLY EXPORTED
TO BOTH CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES:
PLACENTA (AFTERBIRTH), GONADOTROPIN CORIONICA (HORMONE EXTRACT
FROM PREGNANT WOMEN), BILIARY (BILE) SALTS, COLIC (COLON) ACID,
HYDROCOLIC ACID, AND OXYCOLIC ACID. CUBANS HAVE ALSO CONSIDERED
MORE VARIED DRUG MANUFACTURE FOR FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

6. DURATE POINTED OUT THAT MOST MAJOR US PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES
HAVE CALLED ON MEDICUBA.
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